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UNCLAS SANTIAGO 001636

SIPDIS

STATE FOR ECA (NBISHOP)  
STATE FOR WHA/PDA (DPRINCE)

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: UPDATE ON LITTLE LEAGUE BASEBALL IN CHILE

1. SUMMARY: AS PART OF ITS MISSION PERFORMANCE PLAN, POST HAS INITIATED YOUTH SPORTS ACTIVITIES AS A GRASSROOTS EFFORT TO ENCOURAGE INTERACTION WITH NEWER GENERATIONS OF CHILEANS WHO DO NOT MEET THE CRITERIA FOR TRADITIONAL POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ELITES. POST WILL BE REQUESTING U.S. GUEST COACHES AND SPEAKERS TO CONDUCT CLINICS/CLASSES FOR RECENTLY LAUNCHED LITTLE LEAGUE CHILE. END SUMMARY.

2. JUSTIFICATION: AS NOTED IN OUR MISSION PERFORMANCE PLAN GOAL ON MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING, POST HAS EMBARKED ON A SERIES OF ACTIVITIES TO STRENGTHEN AND BROADEN PARTICIPATION OF UNDER-PRIVILEGED YOUTH IN LITTLE LEAGUE BASEBALL. WHILE CHILE ENJOYS STEADY ECONOMIC GROWTH AND IS A STABLE, DEMOCRATIC COUNTRY, LIKE ANY DEVELOPING NATION (OR DEVELOPED NATION FOR THAT MATTER), IT LAGS BEHIND IN SOME SOCIAL PROGRAMS FOR "AT RISK" CHILDREN.

3. WORKING WITH LIKE-MINDED CHILEAN AND AMERICAN BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS, THE AMBASSADOR AND MRS. KELLY LAUNCHED LITTLE LEAGUE CHILE IN APRIL, 2005. LITTLE LEAGUE CHILE IS CHARTERED BY LITTLE LEAGUE INTERNATIONAL IN WILLIAMSPORT, PENNSYLVANIA AND IS BEING GRANTED NON-PROFIT NGO STATUS BY THE CHILEAN GOVERNMENT. BESIDES A BINATIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS (OF WHICH THE AMBASSADOR IS HONORARY CHAIR), LITTLE LEAGUE CHILE OPERATES ITS OWN WEB PAGE AND WILL HANDLE ALL OF ITS ADMINISTRATIVE AND FUND-RAISING RESPONSIBILITIES AS A SELF-SUSTAINING ORGANIZATION.

4. HAVING COMPLETED THEIR FIRST SEASON OF PLAY, SEVEN TEAMS ARE NOW PLANNING FOR A SECOND SEASON. PARTICIPANTS INCLUDE LOCAL NEIGHBORHOOD TEAMS FROM SANTIAGO, AS WELL AS TEAMS FROM THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS. THE BOARD ALREADY HAS PLANS TO INCLUDE TEAMS FROM REGIONS OUTSIDE SANTIAGO. LITTLE LEAGUE CHILE IS ALSO EXPANDING TO INCLUDE KIDS UNDER NINE (TEE BALL) AND YOUNGSTERS AGE 13-15 (SENIOR LEAGUE). LITTLE LEAGUE CHILE PLAYS TWO SEASONS PER YEAR, IN THE SPRING AND FALL.

5. POST SEEKS ECA SUPPORT FOR SPORTS AMBASSADORS/GUEST SPEAKERS AND EXCHANGES TO INCREASE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THIS OUTREACH EFFORT. TO DATE, LITTLE LEAGUE CHILE HAS PROVIDED ACCESS TO COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS, MUNICIPAL ATHLETIC DEPARTMENTS, LOCAL SCHOOLS AND GOVERNMENTS WITH WHOM WE HAVE NOT HAD MUCH CONTACT. IN AN AGE OF TRANSFORMATIONAL DIPLOMACY, POST HOPES TO GIVE NEW GENERATIONS OF CHILEANS AND THIRD-COUNTRY CHILDREN A CHANCE TO UNDERSTAND HOW AMERICAN VALUES OF TEAMWORK, GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP, AND FAIR PLAY TRANSLATE FROM THE BASEBALL DIAMOND TO REAL LIFE.

6. WE LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH ECA.

KELLY